

point of contact with the world, will gather more or less of its contaminations, and will at that point, and for that reason, need frequent applications of cleansing grace. It only needs to state this truth, the beautiful and impressive truth of this homely symbol, to see at once that it is corroborated by universal Christian experience. Every Christian realizes that in journeying as a pilgrim through the world, being in the world and in the flesh, his very contact with it, like the feet of a traveler on a dusty road, leaves on him that incidental pollution from which he constantly desires and prays to be cleansed.

As our Saviour himself declares, this after cleansing is symbolized by the Foot Washing, and since the necessity for this grace is never in any instance separated from Christian experience, neither should its manifest symbol be separated from the ritual of the church. We say again that Foot Washing as a part of the Communion service, being an act symbolical of a grace which must apply to every believer, and being also in its spiritual teaching a preparation for the Communion, is properly a church ritual, and ought to be observed as such, as the Lord commanded. John: 13, 14, 15, 16.

It is the testimony of so eminent a church historian as Dr. Philip Schaff that Foot Washing was for several centuries practiced as a religious right, in the public assembly, by the primitive churches. "Augustine," he says, "refers to the ceremony of Foot Washing as taking place on Maunday Thursday, (the Thursday before Easter.) The synod of Toledo in 694 went so far as to exclude from the Communion table those who refused to have their feet washed on this day. Bernard of Clairvaux even sought to have it recognized as one of the sacraments, but without success. The ceremony is still observed in some of the convents of the Roman church, and very generally in those of the Greek church." Schaff-Herzog Enc. Religious Knowledge, Vol. II, page 823.

Some of the modern sects which observe this ceremony as it was enjoined by the Master rely solely upon his literal command, as expressed or implied in John 13: 14, 15, and do not trouble themselves about the theology of the rite. They go so far sometimes as to discard the idea that it has any theological meaning, and in so doing greatly weaken their own cause. In their excessive zeal for the letter of the command they overlook or ignore the spirit, and attempt to put upon the strictly arbitrary basis of a mechanical and external obedience that which was addressed as much or more to the understanding, to the heart, and to the daily life of the believer. The Master's words to Peter apply to them with equal force, "What I do ye know not now:" and as long as they do not seek to know they are not likely to "know hereafter."

## II. THE LORD'S SUPPER.

With this quotation we leave the foregoing part of our subject and proceed to the consideration of the Agapæ, the Love Feast, that universal symbol of fellowship. We have already seen, in several very important aspects, the necessary relation of the first symbol to the others in this service. Let us add one more observation. Without cleansing, without moral spiritual purity, without the spirit of self abnegation, unselfishness, and mutual service taught in the foot washing symbol, there could be no true fellowship. The Love Feast would be only a hollow mockery, and the fellowship it symbolizes a miserable pretense. In the practical application of these divine principles to the heart and to the daily life

rests the only value of the ordinance. "The flesh profiteth nothing. The words which I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life."

The Love Feast or Agapæ was likewise a part of this primitive Communion service, and remained so for the first several centuries of the Christian Church. Dr. Philip Schaff, the most eminent church historian of modern times, says, in his Encyclopædia, that a custom prevailed in the primitive church according to which all the members of a congregation, even the master and his slaves, met together at a common meal, celebrating the Eucharist as brethren among brethren. It would not be difficult to find striking precedents for such an institution both among the Jews, and the Greeks, and the Romans. In his letter to Trajan, Pliny classes it among the meetings of secret societies, so well known to the Romans of the empire. It is more probable however, continues the learned doctor, that it grew up directly from the simple and natural commemoration of the events of "the night in which the Lord was betrayed." (I Cor 11: 23.) It is mentioned for the first time in the epistle of Jude (12); and during the next three or four centuries it is often spoken of by the Fathers. Tertullian gives a vivid and touching description of it in his Apologetics c 39. Originally the character of the Agapæ was strictly devotional; the feast culminated in the celebration of the Eucharist. At the same time however it was a social symbol of the equality and solidarity of the kiss of love; here communications from other congregations were read and answered," etc. (Schaff Herzog Enc. of Religious Knowledge, Vol. I page 34.)

That our Lord ate such a Supper "in the night in which he was betrayed," together with the fact that for four hundred years it was an unvarying feature of the Communion service, is conclusive evidence that whether it was the Paschal Supper or not our Lord's disciples and apostles understood that in its new relation the feast was to be perpetuated in the church.

Toward the end of the fourth century however it began to lose its spiritual character, and on account of the abuses which crept into its observance such as the preparation of separate feasts for the rich and poor, it was finally excluded from among the religious observances of the church. But it should be remembered that for four hundred years it kept its place in the proper ritual of the church, among the ordinances delivered unto it by the apostles, after the lapse of a thousand years was again restored to its primitive place by the Brethren churches, where it is now practiced in its original form by the several branches of that denomination.

It is the divinely appointed symbol of Fellowship, and Brotherly Love; and in adopting it, our Lord, as was often his manner, adapted a universal idea to the special service of the Church. To break bread together, to eat at the same board, is every where a sign of concord, of agreement, of fraternal love, of brotherhood; and the self same sign was transplanted into the Church, and by our Lord's appointment and blessing was made the holy and perpetual symbol of Christian Fellowship. By this act he has conferred upon it the dignity of a holy ordinance, important in itself, and in its relation to what follows. As there could be no fellowship of a Christian Brotherhood without purity and unselfishness, so there could be no Communion without fellowship. One is a fitting prelude to the other; and thus the first two ordinances of the Communion service prepare us for, lead us up to, and culminate in the Eucharist.

## III. THE EUCHARIST.

That the Eucharist is in part, or wholly symbolical, is held by all Protestant denominations. The Roman Catholic Church and also the Greek Church hold the doctrine of Transubstantiation, or the miraculous change of the bread and wine into the real body and real blood of Christ, rejecting all figurative or symbolical interpretations of the ordinance. As this view was manifestly contrary to the Lord's own words, (John 6: 52-63,) and to every reasonable principle of exegesis, and as it had been for ages the open door of admittance for the grossest abuses, and the worst spiritual tyranny, the Reformers of course rejected it, and turned directly to the Scriptures for a more rational interpretation of the doctrine. It was not to be expected however that the first effort should result in complete emancipation from ages of error, hence we find traces of the old heresy, a sort of sublimated transubstantiation in the first dissenting, or Lutheran creed. In the language of that confession the bread and wine do not become in themselves the real corporeal body and blood of Christ, but "that body and blood are received in, with, and under the bread and wine of the sacrament." Or as a theologian of that school, (Von Burger) explains, since our Lord said, "Take, eat, drink, this is my body, my blood," "his body and blood are really and truly present, and are distributed and received. This reception is by the mouth, but at the same time spiritually, because the body and blood of Christ is a spiritual heavenly food, which is not assimilated by the body as earthly food would be. While this was a great improvement upon the Roman Catholic view, it was not destined to become the accepted and final deliverance of the Reformation on that subject. That dignity was reserved for the Helvetic Confession, which, with slight modifications, represents the position, the final settlement of faith, of the great Protestant body. The article in the First Helvetic Confession reads as follows, "The bread and wine of the Supper are holy, true symbols, through which the Lord offers and presents the true communion of the body and blood of Christ for the feeding and nourishing of the spiritual and eternal life. The most rational and scriptural recast and elaboration of this statement of the doctrine of the Eucharist is to be found in the Westminster Confession of Faith, one hundred and eleven years after, which reads as follows, "The Lord's Supper is to be observed for the perpetual remembrance of the sacrifice of himself in his death, the sealing of all benefits thereof with true believers, their spiritual nourishment and growth in him, their further engagement in, and to all duties which they owe to him; and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with him, and with each other, as members of his mystical body. Worthy believers do inwardly by faith, really and indeed, yet not carnally and corporally, but spiritually receive and feed upon Christ crucified, and all the benefits of his death." In the Shorter Catechism of that confession we have the following, "What is the Lord's Supper? A sacrament wherein by the giving and receiving of bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, his death is showed forth, and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of his body and blood, with all its benefits, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace."

The Society of Friends discard the outward symbols, and teach that "the communion of the body and blood of Christ is inward and spiritual, which is the participation of his flesh and blood,

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